

exchanging similar North Carolina documents. Such documents were in the collection as early as 1813, the secretary of state having been directed to acquire those documents "...from the Executives and Legislatures of the several States, and the Acts and Journals of Congress, together with the Public Documents received from the Executive and Congress of the United States...."⁴⁴ Thomas W. Randolph, Governor of Virginia in 1820, eloquently explained his reasoning concerning exchanges:

This feeble demonstration of the very great esteem and good will entertained by the Executive body of the Government of Virginia for your State and all its authorities will I trust be reciprocated by similar feelings on your part and by the interesting gift of the Constitution and laws of North Carolina[.]

Independent sovereignties bound together by an alliance the conditions of preserved and enforced by a central and paramount authority constituted proportionally by all cannot fail to promote their best interests by studying the peculiar spirit of Legislation and the local Jurisprudence of each other[.] Laws are rules for the government of the conduct and actions of men in their relation towards each other that have been declared by an authority the legitimacy of which none can in sincerity deny. Being founded upon near views of real conduct and actions at all times so much influenced by physical circumstances and the durable consequences of old events which are all genuine materials of History, the general study of laws becomes a valuable part of that most important branch of human learning.⁴⁵

Over the years such exchanges contributed significantly to the size of the collection. In his report for 1858-1859, librarian Oliver H. Perry reported having received a total of 164 Congressional documents and fifty-eight state documents since the previous report two years earlier. During the two-year span ending in 1881, 209 United States documents and 231 other volumes received through exchange expanded the collection.⁴⁶